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Book Review: The Favored Queen, by Carolly Erickson

Sarah L. Johnson

Eastern Illinois University, sljohnson2@eiu.edu

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Book Review

The Favored Queen.
Erickson, Carolly (author).
Nov. 2011. 295p. St. Martin's, hardcover, $25.99 (9780312596903).

Jane Seymour, third wife of Henry VIII and the one he reportedly loved the best, takes the stage in this self-described "historical entertainment." As a noblewoman in the early sixteenth century, Jane serves as maid of honor first to pious, devoted Catherine of Aragon and later to Anne Boleyn, whose petulant and proud nature endears her to few members of the harsh royal court. Jane's lively first-person narrative follows her transformation from passive observer to active participant in the marital stakes. Her family's immoral conduct and her failed engagement to a family friend test her resolve, yet she survives and emerges triumphant as one of the king's closest confidants. One well-crafted subplot involves the Nun of Kent, a prophetess who curses Henry's marriage to Queen Anne. As Erickson alludes in her author's note, significant parts of the story are wholly invented. One of these, Jane's affair with a handsome French glazier, isn't exactly believable, either. Overall, this is a light diversion likely to appeal to fans of *The Tudors*.
— *Sarah Johnson*

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